DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 470 454 FL 027 490

AUTHOR	Briscoe, Ted, Ed.
TITLE	Linguistic Evolution through Language Acquisition: Formal and Computational Models.
ISBN	ISBN-0-521-66299-0
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	356p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Cambridge University Press, 100 Brook Hill Drive, West Nyack, NY 10994-2133 ($65). Tel: 845-353-7500; e-mail: publicity@cup.org; Web site: http://www.cambridge.org.
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Collected Works - General (020)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available From EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Communication Skills; *Cultural Influences; Evolution; Grammar; *Language Acquisition; Linguistic Theory; Oral Communication Method; Semantics; Sociolinguistics; Syntax
IDENTIFIERS	*Language Change; Universal Grammar

ABSTRACT

This collection of papers examines how children acquire language and how this affects language change over the generations. It proceeds from the basis that it is important to address not only the language faculty per se within the framework of evolutionary theory, but also the origins and subsequent development of languages themselves, suggesting that languages evolve via cultural rather than biological transmission on a historical rather than genetic timescale. Ten papers include: (1) "Introduction" (Ted Briscoe); (2) "Learned Systems of Arbitrary Reference: The Foundation of Human Linguistic Uniqueness" (Michael Oliphant); (3) "Bootstrapping Grounded Word Semantics" (Luc Steels and Frederic Kaplan); (4) "Linguistic Structure and the Evolution of Words" (Robert Worden); (5) "The Negotiation and Acquisition of Recursive Grammars as a Result of Competition among Exemplars" (John Batali); (6) "Learning, Bottlenecks and the Evolution of Recursive Syntax" (Simon Kirby); (7) "Theories of Cultural Evolution and their Application to Language Change" (Partha Niyogi); (8) "The Learning Guided Evolution of Natural Language" (William J. Turkel); (9) "Grammatical Acquisition and Linguistic Selection" (Ted Briscoe); and (10) "Expression/Induction Models of Language Evolution: Dimensions and Issues" (James R. Hurford). (Papers contain references.) (SM)

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